

**Quick Summary:** This section describes the Town's demographics as well as the community concerns and needs discussed in the survey results and open house. This description, along with the assessment of existing facilities in Section 2, serves as a basis for the recommendations made later in the plan.

## Section 2. Demographic Analysis and Survey Results

### 2.1. Introduction

The Town of Hertford is located on the Perquimans River near the Albemarle Sound in eastern North Carolina. The Town was incorporated in 1758 by North Carolina State Statute from the land owned by Jonathan Phelps and established as a thriving coastal community and the county seat. Since the 1950's, the Town has grown as a vacation destination – attracting visitors to its quaint downtown and scenic riverfront. The Town has also recently experienced a boom in new residences as it has become more and more popular for retirees and new businesses.

It is important to understand the needs of the people of Hertford as a basis for the recommendations to be made by this Pedestrian Plan. In order to do so, the Plan must assess the Town's population demographics and future trends; the community's concerns and needs about pedestrian travel; and, existing facilities such as sidewalks, roads, and recreation facilities. This section describes each of these items and provides a summary of next steps for recommendations.

### 2.2. Demographic Analysis

For the Pedestrian Plan, there are several important demographics that must be analyzed in order to create an understanding of the town's residents and their travel behaviors. These demographics are as follows:

- ◆ Past and Current Population
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Educational Attainment
- ◆ Income and Poverty Status
- ◆ Household Vehicle Availability
- ◆ Work Commute
- ◆ To-Work Travel Time

Information for these demographic items was collected from the 2000 US Census data. A complete analysis of the Town's demographics is contained in Appendix 2.

From the demographic analysis contained in Appendix 2, several key characteristics can be inferred about the residents of Hertford. With a US Census population of

#### What Makes A Great Place to Live?

Relocate-America.com, Money Magazine, and others have for years taken large surveys to answer this question. Parks, recreation, short commutes contribute to a "vibrancy" of place. A look at current and past winners reveals that the small cities frequently share something in common: residents can safely and conveniently walk to most of their daily destinations. This year's (2007) winner? Asheville, North Carolina.

*(Source: relocate-america.com)*

2,070 in 2000, the Town is nearly 50 percent Caucasian and 50 percent African-American. This is markedly different from Perquimans County, which is approximately 70 percent Caucasian and 30 percent African-American. The 2000 US Census data showed little information about the Town's Hispanic population. In general, the Hispanic population is growing in the State of North Carolina, and this will probably be reflected in the Hispanic population in Hertford.

By age, the Town is comparable to the County but has a greater than the State average percent population of elderly. The Town has nearly 30 percent of its population below the age of 19, another third of the population between the ages of 30 – 60, and nearly 20 percent of the population above the age of 70. The State has less than 21 percent of the population below the age of 19, and less than 10 percent of the population is above the age of 70.

In educational attainment, the Town and County are fairly similar, with more than 30 percent of the population having achieved a high school degree, almost 10 percent having achieved a bachelor's degree, and less than four percent having a graduate or professional school degree. These rates are lower than educational attainment rates in the State, where greater than 15 percent of the population has received a bachelor's degree, and nearly eight percent has received a graduate or professional school degree.

The Town and County differ in income levels. Both the Town's median household income and median family income are lower than those of both the County and the State. In addition, nearly 40 percent of the Town's population live below the poverty line. This is double that of the County, where 17.9 percent of the population live below the poverty line. Of those living below the poverty line in the Town, over 10 percent are under the age of five.

In terms of travel behavior, over a quarter of households have no vehicle available, and nearly 40 percent of households have access to only one vehicle. This is dramatically different than both the county and the state, where less than 10 percent of households have no vehicle available and approximately 30 percent of households have access to one vehicle. In to-work commute, over five percent of the population walked to work in Hertford as of the 2000 US Census – double that of both the County and the State. In addition, almost eight percent of residents work commute was under five minutes – nearly double that of the County and State.

**Figure 2-1. Town of Hertford Change Statistics** (\*indicates forecast or estimate)

Statistic	Census 2000	2007*	2012*	2007-2012 Change*	2007-2012 Annual Rate*
<b>Population</b>	2,070	2,254	2,394	140	1.21%
<b>Median Age</b>	39.6	43.3	44.7	1.4	0.64%
<b>Households</b>	877	985	1,060	75	1.48%
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.29	2.23	2.21	-0.02	-0.18%

Sources: US Bureau of the Census; ESRI Business Analyst\*

**FINDING:** As a result of demographic trends in Hertford, recommendations made in the Pedestrian Plan should provide safer and faster pedestrian access to jobs, schools, and basic needs such as the grocery store and post office.

Hertford's demographic analysis shows that the Town has:

- ◆ A lower income population than the County and State, with a greater percentage of very young children living below the poverty line.
- ◆ More households with no vehicle or access to only one vehicle than the County or State.
- ◆ A lower commute to-work time than County or State, indicating that Hertford's residents live closer to their jobs than those in the County or State.
- ◆ A higher walk to-work rate than the County or State.

These trends show that Hertford has a demand for pedestrian facilities which serve as functional transportation routes in addition to being recreation facilities. As a result, recommendations made in the Pedestrian Plan should provide safer and faster pedestrian access to jobs, schools, and basic needs such as the grocery store and post office.

### **2.3. Community Concerns and Needs**

The best way to generate information about the Town's community concerns and needs is to ask members of the community. For the Hertford Pedestrian Plan, community members were asked to complete surveys and provide input through an open house and steering committee. The following paragraphs briefly describe the results of the survey and open house and provide guidance for the recommendations that should be developed based on the results of these two input processes. Complete results of the survey and open house are contained in Appendix 3.

#### **2.3.1. Survey Results**

The Town of Hertford Pedestrian Plan survey was conducted from January to March 2007, and received over 50 survey respondents. In general, more women than men responded to the survey and most respondents were over the age of 50. The survey's questions were designed to ask Hertford residents about their walking behavior and preferences, about destinations they currently walk to, how they feel about walking in Hertford, and about destinations they would like to be able to walk to and specific improvements they recommend.

The results of the questions on the survey about respondents travel preferences are as follows:

- ◆ The most respondents indicated that they walk for visiting family and friends. Many respondents also listed church, shopping, post office, restaurant, and parks as destinations that they walk to. Most respondents rarely indicated that they walk to work or the grocery store. This trend may be due to the age of most respondents, who may be retired and therefore not need to walk to work, and also may prefer to drive to the grocery store in order to use their car to haul their purchases home. In addition, few respondents indicated school as a destination that they walked to – this, too, may be due to the age of the respondents.

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- ◆ Most respondents indicated that they walk for exercise, and similarly, a park or recreation center was the top priority for destinations which respondents would like to be able to walk to. Other destinations respondents would like to be able to walk to include: friends, church, and the grocery store.
- ◆ In general, respondents feel comfortable walking in Hertford, although in the discussion questions many respondents indicated they would like to see the safety and appearance of the area near King Street improved and stated that they felt uncomfortable walking there.
- ◆ The most respondents indicated that they were most likely not to walk to a destination in Hertford because it was too far, but a close second was because respondents felt that the traffic makes walking unsafe and unpleasant. Another top reason respondents chose not to walk was because there is not continuous sidewalk to the destination.
- ◆ 63% of respondents would prefer money to be spent on sidewalk on existing roads over money spent on greenways.

From this information, some conclusions can be made about respondents needs, and are described in the following list. These conclusions are used to help guide the recommendations and projects in the Pedestrian Plan.

- ◆ Most respondents do not walk to school or work probably because they are older and retired and therefore do not attend school or go to work. This result is in keeping with the age profile of survey respondents as well as the Town as a whole.
- ◆ Traffic and lack of sidewalk connections are one of the major limitations to walking in Hertford. Respondents would walk more if there were improvements to connect more destinations with sidewalk, especially parks and recreation facilities. Improvements should also be made to make respondents feel more comfortable when walking in Hertford.
- ◆ Respondents currently enjoy walking to visit friends and family and attend church. Existing sidewalk and pedestrian connections should be preserved to these destinations and additional connections should be provided.

From survey responses, some of the frequently discussed locations that respondents would like to see sidewalk are:

- ◆ Grubb Street
- ◆ Edenton Road Street
- ◆ Church Street
- ◆ Dobbs Street

**FINDING:** From the responses to the Hertford Pedestrian Plan survey, recommendations in the Plan should connect more destinations, especially parks and recreation facilities, with sidewalks and create safer crossing conditions.

### 2.3.2. Open House Results

Open Houses for the Hertford Pedestrian Plan were held on May 8, 2007 and on August 23, 2007. The May 8, 2007 meeting was held in the Perquimans County Courthouse to present the preliminary Draft Plan and recommendations to the public for comment. The August 23, 2007 meeting was held as part of the Hertford Grammar School Open House to distribute information and materials about the Pedestrian Plan as well as gather input. In general, the following comments were made about the plan:

- ◆ Provide a walkway across the S-bridge.
- ◆ Keep downtown area safe and clean. Presently the grass grows too high to keep litter under control.
- ◆ Walkways to Perquimans County High School need to be well-lit and secured to promote resident walks to community events.

These comments were incorporated into the Plan's recommendations.

## 2.4. Summary

The results of the demographic analysis, Pedestrian Plan survey, and Open House show two very different sets of people in Hertford with two different sets of perceived needs. In the demographic analysis, it is clear that Hertford has a lower income population, with less access to vehicles, who will need pedestrian facilities which provide safe, convenient access to important necessary destinations such as schools, workplaces, and grocery stores. The survey results and comments from the Open House, on the other hand, show an older, more affluent population which enjoys using pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and greenways for recreation and exercise. The Hertford Pedestrian Plan should be able to provide recommendations that address both sets of needs, and in so doing create a better, safer place to live for all of the Town's residents.